

URGENT ACTION

THREE IRANIAN JOURNALISTS SENTENCED

Bahman Ahmadi Amou'i and Saeed Laylaz have been sentenced to prison terms, Bahman Ahmadi Amou'i also to flogging. Keyvan Samimi Behbehani remains in solitary confinement. All three men are prisoners of conscience.

Bahman Ahmadi Amou'i, an editor at the business daily paper *Sarmayeh* which was closed by the authorities on 2 November, was sentenced to seven years and four months' imprisonment and 32 lashes on 4 January 2010 by a Revolutionary Court in Tehran. The sentence includes five years for "colluding with intent to harm national security;" one year for "propaganda against the system;" one year and 32 lashes for "disrupting public security" and four months for "insulting the president." His lawyer is lodging an appeal within the required 20 days and will request his release on bail until the appeal is heard. He is held in Section 350 of Evin Prison. .

Saeed Laylaz, also an editor at *Sarmayeh*, was sentenced to nine years' imprisonment by a Revolutionary Court in Tehran on 2 December 2009 after he was convicted of "attending illegal gatherings" and "possessing classified documents." His lawyer has said that that his client had access to information that had been posted online and therefore not classified information. Saeed Laylaz has been refused bail and remains held in Evin Prison.

The editor of the banned magazine *Nameh*, **Keyvan Samimi Behbehani**, was granted 10 days' leave from prison on 9 December in order to attend his daughter's wedding. He has since returned to Evin Prison where he is held in solitary confinement in Section 209.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Persian, Arabic, English, French or your own language:

v Calling on the authorities to release Bahman Ahmadi Amou'i, Saeed Laylaz and Keyvan Samimi Behbehani immediately and unconditionally, as they are being detained solely for their peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of expression;

v Expressing concern that Bahman Ahmadi Amou'i has been sentenced to flogging, a cruel punishment which amounts to torture, and noting that Iran is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) which strictly prohibits torture;

v Urging the authorities to ensure they are not tortured or otherwise ill-treated, and that reports of torture or other ill-treatment are thoroughly investigated and anyone found responsible is brought to justice in fair proceedings.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 19 FEBRUARY 2010 TO:

Leader of the Islamic Republic

Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei

The Office of the Supreme Leader

Islamic Republic Street – End of

Shahid Keshvar Doust Street, Tehran,

Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: via website: <http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/index.php?p=letter> (English)

<http://www.leader.ir/langs/fa/index.php?p=letter> (Persian)

Salutation: Your Excellency

Mr Ali Reza Avaei

Karimkhan Zand Avenue

Sana'i Avenue, Corner of Alley 17,

No 152

Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: avaei@Dadgostary-tehran.ir

Salutation: Dear Mr Avaei

And copies to:

Director, Human Rights Headquarters of Iran

His Excellency Mohammad Javad Larijani

Bureau of International Affairs, Office of the Head of the Judiciary, Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave. south of Serah-e Jomhuri, Tehran 1316814737, Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: bia.judi@yahoo.com

Fax: + 98 21 5 537 8827 (please keep trying)

Head of the Judiciary in Tehran

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the third update to UA 171/09 (MDE 13/062/2009). Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/062/2009/en, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/092/2009/en> and <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/115/2009/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Bahman Ahmadi Amou'i, husband of journalist Zhila Bani Ya'qoub (who was released on 19 August) has been held at Evin Prison since his arrest on 20 June 2009. After 65 days of solitary confinement Bahman Ahmadi Amou'i was moved in late August to a cell in Section 209 of the prison, measuring 3.5 m² which he shared with two other detainees. Branch 2 of the Revolutionary Court acknowledged that they were investigating him at the beginning of October but as the investigation was still incomplete they would not allow his lawyer to see the investigation file.

Saeed Laylaz had appeared before Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran on 23 September to appeal against a two-month extension of his detention order but his appeal was rejected, despite an earlier order setting bail at two billion rials (approximately US\$ 200,000).

Following the Ashoura commemoration on 27 December, which also coincided with the seventh-day of mourning for Grand Ayatollah Montazeri, a senior dissident cleric who had died the week before, well over a thousand people are reported to have been arrested, including 500 in Tehran, 200 in Najafabad and 600 in Esfahan. They include at least fifteen journalists: Mashallah Shamsolvaezin, Morteza Kazemian, Keyvan Mehregan, Reza Tajik, Mostafa Izadi, Mohammad Javad Saber, Behrang Tonkabani, Arvin Sedagatkish, Roozbeh Karimi, Mohammadreza Zohdi, Ali Hekmat, Sam Mahmoudi and three women, Badrolsadat Mofidi, Negin Derakhshan and Nasrin Vaziri.

Scores of people associated with opposition parties, human rights defenders and students are among many others detained since the demonstrations. The unrest on 'Ashoura was one of the worst since the days following the June 2009 presidential election. The authorities have stated variously that between seven and fifteen people died, although have disputed that security forces were responsible for all the deaths

'Ashoura, the 10th day of the Islamic month of Moharram, is a Shi'a Muslim religious occasion marking the killing, or martyrdom, of Imam Hossein, the grandson of the Prophet Mohammad.

Since the announcement that incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had won the 12 June election, which many people disputed, the authorities have used excessive force to quell largely peaceful protests. Before the recent demonstrations, the authorities acknowledged 36 deaths, while the opposition claims that over 70 have died. The authorities have acknowledged that over 4,000 were arrested, although the true figure may well be higher. Many of those detained were tortured or otherwise ill-treated in detention centres across the country. Some have alleged they were raped, although the authorities have denied this after cursory investigations and other measures which appear designed to hide, rather than uncover, the truth. Over 80 have been sentenced to prison terms or flogging in connection with the unrest, including those sentenced after mass "show trials" which began in August. At least seven have been sentenced to death – most recently Ahmad Karimi and Ali Zahed were sentenced to death at the end of December 2009.

For further information about the post-election events please see Iran: Election contested, Repression compounded (Index MDE 13/123/2009), December 2009, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE13/123/2009/en>

Further information on UA: 171/09 Index: MDE 13/002/2010 Issue Date: 08 January 2010

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